

MINUTES OF THE TENBY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING HELD 14TH JANUARY 2025

Present: Councillor Dai Morgan Mayor
Councillor Laurence Blackhall
Councillor Emma Lewis (Zoom)
Councillor Michelle Evans
Councillor Laura Crockford
Councillor Sam Skyrme-Blackhall (Zoom)
Councillor Tom Sloan

In attendance: Mr Andrew Davies Clerk to the Council/Financial Officer
Sharon Thompson Deputy Clerk

The Mayor informed Councillors of the sad passing of Mr Stuart Fecci after his battle with cancer. Mr Fecci had once sat round this table. Heartfelt sympathy was sent to Sally-Ann, Sam and all Mr Fecci's family. Councillors stood and observed a minute's silence.

UNDER STANDING ORDERS ADOPTED BY THIS COUNCIL, PHOTOGRAPHING, RECORDING, BROADCASTING OR TRANSMITTING THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING BY ANY MEANS IS PROHIBITED WITHOUT THE COUNCIL'S PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT.

153. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hallett (dispensation) and Phillips.

154. TO DISCLOSE ANY PERSONAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS LISTED BELOW

None disclosed.

155. PUBLIC PARTICIATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK QUESTIONS AND MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED DURING TONIGHTS MEETING AND WHICH IS OPEN FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS ARE EXCLUDED

None present.

156. TO AGREE ITEMS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMITTEE MINUTES, EXCEPT THOSE MARKED PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL, BE GIVEN TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS PRESENT

Proposed by Cllr Blackhall and seconded by Cllr Sloan.

RESOLVED

That items of correspondence and committee minutes, except those marked private and confidential, be given to the members of the press present.

157. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 10TH DECEMBER 2024

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Tenby Town Council held 10th December 2024 be confirmed and signed as accurate.

158. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Page 87 Item 146 – Reflections of the Last Year: Cllr Blackhall wondered if a list of all activities, just a one-line heading, showing for the record the progress of TTC's Community Engagement Officer and TTC over year could be appended to the minutes.

159. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS FOR DECEMBER (INCLUDING SCHEDULED PAYMENTS, UNPRESENTED CHEQUES, RECEIPTS, ACCOUNT BALANCES, BUDGET MONITORING TO DATE AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS) AND CONSIDER ANY ISSUES

The Clerk explained the discrepancy with an online payment which has gone through twice, this should be resolved once the statement from the supplier is received. The Mayor recalled there was an issue with this payment at the time of bank authorisation.

Cllr Blackhall referred to broadband costs which were initially set up as part of the EPF Scheme, asking how long the contracts run for? Could we look to transfer? There may be better deals around now.

The Mayor proposed acceptance of the accounts and Cllr Sloan seconded.

RESOLVED

That the accounts for December (including scheduled payments, unpresented cheques, receipts, account balances, budget monitoring to date and bank reconciliations) be approved.

160. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS FOR GRANT FUNDING AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS:

a. Tenby Surf Lifesaving and Watersports Club Foil Division – Hydrofoil Club equipment and start-up expenses

The Clerk reminded members that a grant was given to this group earlier in year and TTC do not normally give to the same organisation within a 12-month period. However, this application was for a new arm of the Club.

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall told members that the Club supports various events including the Boxing Day Swim. The Mayor suggested perhaps a part grant and to ask TTC's Community Engagement Officer to assist the club in gaining a

supplemental grant. Alternatively, we could suggest they wait until the next financial year and apply again.

Cllr Blackhall suggested it may be worth asking whether they could have a conversation with our Community Engagement Officer and Pembrokeshire's Regeneration Team. The matter could come back to a future meeting and we could maybe assist with match fund. It is recognised that a lot is done for community by this organisation.

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall agrees with what fellow councillors have said, regeneration seems very hard to get hold of so a conversation with our Community Engagement Officer a good suggestion. Seconded by Cllr Crockford.

RESOLVED

That the matter stand deferred until our Community Engagement Officer can have a discussion with the club.

161. TO CONFIRM TENBY TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 2025/26 AND SET THE PRECEPT

Councillors can see where the drop in the council tax base has created a major potential increase for ratepayers. Full council proposed using reserves to help bridge that gap.

Looking at utilising already earmarked reserves to meet some budgetary costs, if we add a further £40K that is already sitting in earmarked reserve pot for Special Projects in the Community, it will reduce the precept requirement further. Any shortfall will be met with grant funding that TTC's CEO is already funding.

The Clerk suggested releasing £97,773.90 from earmarked funds to reduce the precept requirement. This meant that we would have to increase the council tax by about 3% because of the reduction in the council tax base rate but this was not so much as initially feared.

The Mayor felt that this was the best situation in a tight squeeze. He was not a fan of lowering council tax as this stored up problems for the future.

We could be a lot worse off, he said. We should be using reserves for their intended purposes instead of stock piling. We still have a surplus of £50k sitting there for emergencies.

Cllr Blackhall favoured one of the other funding scenarios outlined by the Clerk which was for slightly less allocation from the Special Project reserve and a 5.4% increase rather than 3%.

It makes a relatively small difference in the amount it raises but it is about base lines, said Cllr. Blackhall.

The reason we're having to revise is that council tax base has gone down. This is largely due to PCC change to the second homes premium.

Additional monies have allowed funding toilets for the 4G pitch at Greenhill, Tenby Arts and Events, and retaining library and UFS toilets provision which were the prudent and right things to do.

Cllr Rhys Jordan suggested we use reserves to carry out work on Castle Hill. After years of neglect by PCC, he suggests we should pick up the tab again. It is reckless to use up all our reserves and I propose to keep a slight buffer with a slightly larger percentage rise of 5.4%.

Fourteen years of conservative government have created funding difficulties for PCC, he continued. They seem to be in permanent financial crisis.

TTC have managed their finances very effectively and because of this have been able to bail PCC out on floral displays, toilets, operating the library and a range of other things.

Because TTC have managed things effectively we are able to keep our budget low for the people of Tenby.

Cllr Blackhall proposed the council look to release £91,303.76 funding from reserves to meet projected expenditure not funded from projected income and set a precept requirement of £277, 871.33 (5.4%). He was seconded by the Mayor.

RECOMMENDATION

That the council look to release £91,303.76 funding from reserves to meet projected expenditure not funded from projected income and set a precept requirement of £277, 871.33.

162. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Skyrme-Blackhall is the new Chair of Tenby's Boxing Day Swim committee and is hugely proud of this year's successful event. Final figures have yet to be calculated but thanks go to all local businesses for their support. There had been the biggest crowd yet so onwards and upwards to 2025. Thank you also goes to Mr Chris Osborne.

Update on Tenby Art Events from Cllr Sloan and the Mayor. They attended Greenhill School, albeit rather last minute, for the RNLI competition Christmas card presentation continuing with the positivity shown by the school for the project.

SEPCHN will be arranging another meeting soon. Cllr Blackhall will circulate the date once he has spoken to Mr. Whitehurst.

The Mayor had attended the Boxing Day Swim. It was a fantastic event which is getting bigger and bigger each year; raising so much money for charity. He hoped all had a good Christmas and New Year.

163. ANTI-RACISM ACTION PLAN – TO CONSIDER A MOTION TO ADOPT THE PEMBROKESHIRE ANTI RACISM ACTION PLAN AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS

The Clerk has taken the motion and tweaked for Tenby use. If members were in favour of adopting then we can move forward. The Mayor likes to think we do this already.

Cllr. Blackhall asked to be reminded of the figure committed.

The Clerk said that Haverfordwest had committed £3000, but this had been used to stage events in the county town similar to events previously organised in Tenby by our Community Engagement Officer who had done so with various grants. Some match funding may be required from the Special Projects in the Community Fund.

The Mayor proposed accepting and Cllr Sloan seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

That Tenby Town Council adopt the Pembrokeshire Anti-Racism Plan

164. RECENT UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE BRYNHIR DEVELOPMENT BY PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – CLLR BLACKHALL

Cllr. Blackhall felt it was good news PCC had appointed a Contractor with a good track record.

Progress is good, he said. It is just slightly disappointing the time line has slipped again which means a later delivery of housing than in reports of about 6 months ago.

If you look back at the trail, there has been slippage at various times and I am concerned that things keep slipping, he continued. It is important that PCC look at their processes to try and avoid further slippage. They should consider putting in place a management programme, he suggested. Project management is important as people are waiting for houses.

He proposed writing to the PCC Cabinet member responsible, welcoming the progress and the appointment of contractor but express concern at further slippage and ask if plans are in place to try and avoid this going forward. People need houses now and further delays are not helpful.

Even though it's only a short delay further slippage is not useful agreed the Mayor.

165. TO CONSIDER ANY FINANCIAL OFFICER/CLERK'S ITEMS AND TO AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS

a. Update on Casual Vacancy

No election has been requested and we are asked to fill through co-option as soon as possible. We can look to co-opt at our February meeting so if members are agreeable, the Deputy Clerk will publicise the fact that we are seeking to fill the vacancy through co-option in the morning and ask for letters to be submitted by 31st. Candidates could then be invited in at the next meeting.

b. To give a verbal report from our Christmas Lighting Contractors regarding Tudor Square crossroad displays

This year had been very challenging for our contractors with the amount of scaffolding reducing access to fixing points for displays.

They had achieved what they could in the circumstances but were becoming increasingly concerned about the frequency and fierceness of the winter storms we were now experiencing.

The crossroad displays over Tudor Square introduced in 2019 were far heavier than those there previously. This year they were flapping almost uncontrollably in the strong winds, putting tremendous strain on the catenary wire and anchor points

There is a year left on their contract and our contractors are no longer prepared to take the liability of erecting these large displays in Tudor Square due to concerns over their structural integrity during storms.

The anchor points will sustain normal festoons of bulbs which are far lighter and the weight is more evenly distributed.

The crossroads may be able to be used in Upper Frog Street instead as the span is far shorter and the loading on the support wires less.

The Clerk suggested setting up a working party between councillors and our contractor as soon as practicable on his return from leave to look at options.

Cllr. Skyrme-Blackhall agreed with Clerk.

Tudor Square was a wind tunnel and the storms were becoming far more frequent and heavier, she said. The Square always looks beautiful so we need to look at something different and safer. Some of the trees around St Mary's were also in need of replacement so this could be an ideal time to review everything.

If our professional contractors say things are not safe then we need to act, agreed Cllr. Blackhall. A working party is a good idea, a good opportunity to review our displays and perhaps be a bit creative.

Cllr. Lewis, having previously lived in one of the buildings onto which the lights are attached, agreed it was important to deal with the situation before there was an accident.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk arrange a working party meeting of councillors and our contractors to examine the issue as soon as practicable upon his return from leave.

166. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Planning committee – Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 7 pm

Full council -Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 7.30 pm

167. TO PROPOSE ANY ITEM FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Mayor elect 2025/26

VE Day Celebrations – Cllr Phillips

168. TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS UNDER THE “PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT OF 1960”